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**“OPEN CALL” FOR IDEAS TO BENEFIT FISHERIES RESOURCES IN  
LAKE ONTARIO/ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CORTLAND, NY—The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today they are conducting an open call for ideas for projects to benefit fish species and their environments in the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River Basin. The input provided from these ideas will help the Service identify projects, establish funding levels, and prioritize projects. Any individual or organization can submit one or several ideas.

Project ideas can be submitted to the Service by September 1, 2006. Ideas, which eventually develop into formal proposals, could be funded by the Fish Enhancement, Mitigation and Research Fund (FEMRF). The FEMRF is a \$24 million fund managed by the Service with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) serving as Trustee.

“The Service is asking for the community to send us ideas, suggestions, comments, and general feedback about potential projects that they would like to see funded,” said June DeWeese, FEMRF Project Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To provide your input about what types of projects you would like to see funded in your community, please contact DeWeese by phone 607-753-9334, fax 607-753-9699, or email to [June\\_DeWeese@fws.gov](mailto:June_DeWeese@fws.gov).

To qualify for further development and potential funding, an idea should address one or more of the following objectives of the FEMRF:

1. Projects in the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River Basin with benefits to multiple species;
2. Projects in the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River Basin to benefit declining species, species of special concern, species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), or candidate species for listing under the ESA;

3. Research determined by the Service to be necessary to support upstream or downstream passage of fish at the New York Power Authority's St. Lawrence-FDR Power Project;
4. Projects in Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River Basin waters to benefit species of ecological or economic importance;
5. Projects in Canadian waters with benefits to species of international importance or concern.

Examples of ideas include those which benefit aquatic habitats and/or wetlands, such as restoration of buffers to lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands and enhancement of spawning, nursery, and migratory habitats to benefit fisheries resources.

Restoration ecologists, conservation organizations, researchers, and academic institutions in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, and members of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe are especially encouraged to submit ideas for potential projects. Individuals, anglers, and sport-fishing organizations are also encouraged to submit ideas for projects.

The input provided from these ideas will help the Service identify conservation opportunities that are of interest to the community and could be funded by the FEMRF.

In addition, if anyone has a specific idea that they would like to see funded and would like to begin proposal development, the Service is informally accepting pre-proposals through July 31, 2006. Pre-proposals can be developed by an individual or entity submitting the idea, or others identified by the Service, if those submitting the idea would like assistance. To request the electronic pre-proposal form and instructions for filling it out, please contact [June\\_Deweese@fws.gov](mailto:June_Deweese@fws.gov). Pre-proposals will be thoroughly reviewed and qualifying applicants will be notified by September 1, 2006, as to whether to submit a full proposal for further consideration and potential funding in 2007. Additional cycles for funding proposals will be announced.

The FEMRF was established as part of the licensing of the New York Power Authority's St. Lawrence-Franklin D. Roosevelt Power Project, near Massena, NY. Additional facts about the FEMRF can be found on the New York Field Office website at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/FEMRFfactsheet.pdf>.

For more information, please contact June DeWeese, FEMRF Project Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York Field Office, Cortland, NY 13045 at (607) 753-9334 or [June\\_Deweese@fws.gov](mailto:June_Deweese@fws.gov).